



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

→BOOK : NOTICES.←

PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF CHRIST.*

The historical movement of the present day has, in the study of Christ and the Gospels, produced a new branch of learning. It seeks to create from all available sources of literature and archaeology a trustworthy and living picture of the times in which Jesus lived and the scenes among which he walked. This study is as yet in its infancy. Two works in this department, both by German scholars, have been hitherto available for English readers, and those only in part. Hausrath and Schürer have each written a history of the New Testament times and it is but just now that so much as half of the latter work could be had in English. And even now the high price of these volumes, as well as the scholastic and learned character of the contents, has put them beyond the reach of the mass of Bible students. This is to be regretted, since the labors of these scholars are of the greatest value in Scripture study. Passages in the Gospels and episodes in the life of Jesus are often vividly illuminated and take on an entirely new meaning in the light of the habits, customs, and history of the people of the times.

But now in this book of Edmond Stapfer, an opportunity is given to secure at a moderate price much of the best and latest results of investigation into the Palestine of Christ's day,—a book written in a style marked by French vivacity and attractiveness. It is a book for the people, and it is to be hoped that many people will purchase it. There are deficiencies in it—inaccuracies of statement, as well as lax theological views. But for all that it is the best popular presentation of the subject and will well repay careful and constant reading. It will serve, also, as an excellent introduction to the larger and more exhaustive works already mentioned, and the student once fairly embarked upon this fascinating subject will hardly be satisfied until he has studied the fuller treatise of Schürer.

A glance at the table of contents will give one an idea of the scope of the work. The material is classified in two books: I. Social Life, embracing the geography of the Gospels, a brief history of the times, the Sanhedrim, population, the home life, dwellings and clothing, public life, country life, literature and science; II. the Religious Life, covering an account of the Pharisees and Sadducees, their doctrines and practices, the synagogue, the Sabbath, the Bible, fasts etc., prayer, the temple, the feasts, the Essenes, Jesus, his life and teaching. A wonderful amount of light is thrown upon the New Testament. References more or less helpful are made to more than four hundred passages in the Gospels, so that the book becomes a kind of commentary upon the whole Gospel narrative.

There can be no doubt that a careful study of such a book would result in a clearer understanding of the New Testament. It would give the death-blow to many of those allegorizing, "spiritual" interpretations of the words of Jesus which are the chiefest hindrance to real Bible knowledge. It would also be likely to produce in the mind a truer knowledge of Jesus as a man among the people of

* PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF CHRIST. By Edmond Stapfer, D.D., Professor in the Protestant Theological Faculty of Paris. Translated by Annie Harwood Holmden. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son. Pp. xii, 528.

his time and thus of our time. We need the human Jesus as well as the divine Christ. The Gospels give us both, and we must not lose sight of the man in the God.

But the danger here is that this study will too highly exalt the human element in Jesus and minimize the divine. Dr. Stapfer has either unintentionally made that impression, or else has purposely sought to create it, in the last chapter of his volume. Perhaps it was unavoidable in the brief space at his command. He indeed promises us a fuller treatment of Christ's life and teaching. The reader of this book must note this aspect of it and make the necessary allowance and correction. Evidently the author belongs to the liberal school of theologians and treats the Gospel narratives with a freedom which will not commend itself to many.

All of Dr. Stapfer's statements of fact are not to be relied upon, especially in his references to the present condition of Palestine. It seems as though his information on these points has been obtained from untrustworthy sources. There is also some rhetorical exaggeration indulged in throughout the book, which, while lending interest to its perusal, is liable to leave a false impression upon the reader. Apart from these defects the work is one heartily to be commended. It has an index fairly complete and a table of references to biblical passages quoted, as well as an excellent bibliography. The type is large and clear; the outward appearance attractive, and the amount of information given within, marvelous.

HUMPHREY'S SACRED HISTORY.*

A book, dealing with the field which is covered in this volume, must subject itself to searching tests. Students have a right to expect many things from one who attempts a history of what is confessedly the most difficult period of biblical history. The ideal historian of these times ought to be possessed of at least six characteristics; 1) a passion for facts and a strict adherence to them, 2) skill in exegesis and interpretation, 3) wide acquaintance with the new learning—archæological and critical, 4) a faculty of historical grouping, which can produce an intelligible, reasonable, finished picture, 5) ability to see the universal bearings of the particular, local, temporary, 6) a devout spirit. A formidable list of qualities, surely,—yet without any one of them a writer on these subjects is inadequately furnished. Dr. Humphrey's book is characterized by, 1) traditional exegesis, 2) want of acquaintance with the new learning, or at least an ignoring of it, 3) a theological setting in which the facts appear, 4) the quality of dogmatic generalization and inference, 5) a strict Calvinistic orthodoxy, 6) failure to unify the impressions of the history, 7) a devout, earnest spirit. It is difficult to see how the volume is anything more than an abbreviated summary of Kurtz's *Old Covenant*. The editors, with the commendable partiality of filial regard, say that the book "will bring a surprising number of fresh suggestions of kindling and enriching thought to all careful students of the Bible and advanced readers of *Sacred History*;" and "that it will clear away the mists from the vision of many serious and candid doubters." While the many defects which belong to the very idea and structure of this work will forbid our acquiescence in this judgment, still it may be said that it reveals the workings of the keen, spiritual, vigorous mind of a scholar, moving along the old lines and hampered by preconceptions of what his subject contains.

* SACRED HISTORY FROM THE CREATION TO THE GIVING OF THE LAW. By Edward P. Humphrey, D. D., LL. D., some time Professor in the Danville Theological Seminary. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1888. Pp. xiii, 540.